

Stan Semenoff Logging and NZTA

The 116 'speed and traffic-related offences' of Stan Semenoff Logging

NZTA legal counsel Steve Haszard has stated Stan Semenoff Logging (SSL) has been guilty of 116 'speed and traffic-related offences' over a four-year period.

Fact: SSL notes nine traffic offences.

- 4 speeding tickets
- 2 for not wearing a seatbelt
- 2 for not displaying the TSL number on the windscreen
- 1 for failing to give way

The Herald will be aware that in August 2015 it published a story by David Fisher that in a nine-month period – within the same four-year timeframe as the SSL 'speed and traffic-related offences' – analysis of GPS records showed that NZTA staff exceeded the speed limit 8500 times, at speeds up to 145km/hr, and none had action taken against them.

Each year SSL vehicles make 30,000 trips between the forest and Marsden Point, a total of 4.8 million kms of travel.

The 116 SSL offences refer to roadside inspection infringements. None of these was a safety issue. These are for minor COF defects and in no case was the truck ordered off the road. In every instance the vehicle was allowed to continue its trip to Marsden Point to deliver its logs.

SSL is proud of its safety record and has never had an injury accident.

SSL has a four-star safety rating under NZTA's criteria – the exact same rating as Fonterra.

NZTA's claim of breaches of work time and rest time rules and pervasive logbook issues

For 30 years after logbooks were introduced, government, policy makers, agencies and traffic enforcement (police) accepted there were no safe parking areas for heavy vehicles on the NZTA network. The only places SSL drivers can safely take rest breaks are at the source location (the forest) and at the destination (the port).

At the forest and at the port SSL drivers are able to exit their vehicles, stretch their legs and get a drink. There are restrooms at each location.

Drivers have to queue to be loaded and unloaded. The wait for unloading at Marsden Point is an average 90 minutes, during which truck and driver are idle, and throughout the logging transport industry in Northland driver breaks have been taken during this time.

In the past 12 months NZTA has ruled this is not acceptable. NZTA does not accept drivers can have rest breaks during non-productive periods.

Fact: All of SSL's claimed logbook offences relate to this change in NZTA's policy.

Now the logbooks state that when a driver reaches his maximum 5.5 hours' driving, he must pull over to the side of the road and stop.

Fact: The longest SSL drivers can be behind the wheel continuously is three hours. It is not possible to drive 5.5 hours in Northland. Heading north from Marsden Point they will drive off Cape Reinga long before the time is up; heading south from the forest they will find themselves in the Waikato.

Responsible operators ensure drivers can have rest breaks where there are restrooms and access to hot and cold drinks. For SSL and other logging firms in Northland, these areas are in the forest and at the port.

Fact: NZTA has produced a map of Northland showing there are only two places drivers can safely pull over where there is access to food and restrooms. Both locations are south of Marsden Point.

It should be noted NZTA has issued notices to revoke more than 100 other transport operators' licences:

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicles/regulatory-compliance-review/regulatory-compliance-review-actions-taken/>

Zane Cleaver of major forestry operator Pango is one saying Northland faces major financial implications if SSL's licence is revoked. He is calling for the North's political leaders, particularly Regional Economic Development Minister Shane Jones, to declare where they stand on protecting such a major contributor to Northland's economy and community.